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This summary of Latin's needs in urban public education includes discussions of (1) the need for teachers qualified to handle the obstacles present in this environment, (2) the development of special instructional materials for average and below-average students, (3) improved publicity and public relations for the program in the community, and (4) the strengthening and expansion of classical studies programs in higher educational institutions that tend to attract graduates of inner city public schools. For companion documents see ED 013 562, ED 018 171, and ED 019 022. (AF)

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LATIN'S NEEDS IN THE BIG CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The purpose of this article is to summarize the salient needs of Latin in the urban public schools. What is stated here is not necessarily new or original but perhaps of great importance to the future of Classical Studies in this country since Latin is currently — with some notable exceptions — at its weakest in the public schools of the large cities. In light of the rapid urbanization of America and the advent of the megalopolis we can hardly afford to ignore this weakness. My remarks in this article are based on my personal experience as a high school teacher and Latin Curriculum Writer and on communications I have had with many other urban teachers and other classicists from various parts of the country.[1]

1. Two articles which are *loci classici* for anyone dealing with the problems of Latin in the cities are Dr. Judith LeBovit's *"Qui Timide Rogat Docet Negare"* in *CW* 61 (1967-68) 37-40 and Father Hilary Hayden's "Classics in the Inner City School; Experiments and Proposals" in *CW* 60 (1966-67)

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The first important need is for Latin teachers willing and able to accept the challenge of teaching in the public schools of the big cities. Without denigrating the fine work being done in suburban and non-public schools one must state that generally it is harder to teach in the big city public school systems than elsewhere. Added to the usual frustrations that a teacher encounters anywhere are the problems peculiar to urban teaching: large classes; student indiscipline that sometimes reaches riot proportions; racial and ethnic tensions; lack of interest in education among the parents and general community; poverty among the students and all its attendant problems. Also, in the opinion of some, the urban systems tend to attract more than their fair share of administrative drones — though this point can be disputed.

In such a teaching environment Latin is indeed a delicate flower. The boys and girls are not in general well-disposed towards things intellectual and a "highbrow" academic subject like Latin has little appeal to them. The parents in general have had little formal education and will not encourage their offspring to elect a subject like Latin. Administrators — in their quest for greater efficiency in managing their overcrowded schools — will not bother to have Latin's values explained and, more often than not, a child picks his language from a printed list with no guidance whatsoever. Such a system of language selection greatly favors the modern languages since their values are much more obvious to a typical teenager. Still in a quest to manage overcrowded schools efficiently, administrators frequently will refuse to roster a Latin class which does not meet the numerical definition of a class, viz., 30-40 students.

The obstacles described above are real and formidable but with hard work and effort can be overcome at least partially. The problems are not solved easily. The challenge is there. The energetic Latin teacher — young or old — who wants challenge and the satisfaction that comes from meeting challenge should come to the big city.

It must be clear, however, that a Latin teacher in a big city must embrace all humanity and must be motivated by a genuine zeal to bring the heritage of the Classics to as many as possible. A teacher who feels that Latin is only for the intellectually élite is not going to be happy in the city public schools. The whole philosophy of the city public schools is basically egalitarian and democratic and firmly rooted in educating average and slow children as well as the gifted. It is my personal conviction that Latin can be a very valuable and interesting subject for average and below average boys and girls if the teacher is willing and able to be innovative, imaginative, and creative. Latin stretches the cultural horizons of the culturally-deprived urban child; it enriches the English vocabulary of the verbally impoverished urban child; it brings the refinement of literature and the humanistic tradition to those in most need of such refinement. Innovativeness, imagination, and creativity are essential anywhere in the teaching of Latin, but because of the concern that the urban public schools feel for average and slow children these virtues are particularly important in city teaching. A conservatively oriented teacher who wishes to "cover" the traditional amounts of the traditional triumvirate (Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil) in the traditional amount of time will not, in general, be happy in the big city public schools.

A second major need of Latin in the big city schools is instructional materials suited to the needs of average and below average boys and girls in the cities. Most Latin materials currently available are clearly aimed at the intellectually élite and take no cognizance of the fact that socio-economic conditions affecting many urban public school boys and girls make intellectual achievement more difficult for them. Can we realistically and justly expect a child from a squalid poverty area who may not know from where his next meal is coming, who has no books in his home, and who gets no encouragement from his parents or environment in his intellectual pursuits to accomplish the same as an affluent student coming from an environment that puts great stress on intellectual achievement? Of course not. What we must do is to whet the appetite of the disadvantaged student for further study — not overwhelm him with standards which through no fault of his own and because of his unfortunate circumstances are too high for him.[2]

While not specifically developed with urban public school boys and girls in mind, the new *Artes Latinae* instructional system of the Britan-

93-98. Also very significant is Father Hayden's report on the Inner City Latin Conference of November 1967 found under "In the Schools" in *CW* 61 (1967-68) 178-180.

2. There is reason to believe that we expect too much too soon of our students generally and not only in the urban public schools. See in this connection Paul F. Distler, S.J., *Teach the Latin, I Pray You* (Chicago 1962) 104.

nica Corporation seems to go a long way towards meeting their needs. Our experience in Philadelphia indicates that the careful molecularization of subject matter, the programming, the provision for aural-oral work, and the multisensory media (films, tapes, filmstrips, and study prints) inherent in this instructional system tend to make it suitable for use with a broad spectrum of children.[3] Another series which — though not specifically developed for urban children — offers in my opinion exciting possibilities is Hans Oerberg's *Lingua Latina secundum Rationem Naturae Explicata*.[4] It is very probable that the new multisensory Cambridge Classics Project *Quid Novi?* when it becomes available in this country will be quite useful since it is being specifically geared to average students in Britain's newly developing comprehensive high schools.[5]

New materials specifically for urban children have been developed for the Washington, D.C. FLES Latin program under the energetic leadership of Dr. Judith LeBovit, Washington's Director of Foreign Languages. The spirit of creativity and experimentation started in Washington is spreading to other school districts — my own included. Philadelphia is currently developing its own materials for a 5th grade Latin program which Mrs. Eleanor L. Sandstrom, our Director of Foreign Languages, has slated to begin in some 20 elementary schools in September.

Much more work is needed at all levels in the development of innovative materials. This need applies to Latin in general — not only in the urban public schools.[6] We must become more willing to cast aside old prejudices and predilections. We must apply the findings of educational psychology as well as some of the exciting new ideas of our friends in modern languages to the teaching of our subject. Indeed, "we must find new keys to unlock the old magic box."[7]

I have outlined elsewhere what I think should be the general characteristics of instructional materials specifically geared to the inner city public schools.[8] Some of my proposals may seem radical. Some will accuse me of wanting "to prostitute the Classics." I firmly believe, however, that the treasures of Greece and Rome belong to all mankind. They are a precious heritage; they must not be denied to the masses through blind conservatism on the part of their curators."[9]

A third great need of Latin in the big city public schools is better publicity and public relations. These are essential to Classical Studies everywhere but particularly in inner city areas where parents are largely without formal education and are not likely to encourage their children to study Latin. Perhaps bringing Latin's values to the attention of the urban community and school administrators should be an important task of the local Classical associations. In my opinion the possibility of employing professional public relations experts who would work systematically and on a full-time basis should be carefully considered. In short, I think we need Madison Avenue men or at least some Madison Avenue approaches. In the words of Professor Samuel Lieberman at the 1968 Northeast Conference, "Our merchandise is very good, but we are not selling it effectively."

Recent heroic efforts on the part of Dr. John Latimer and the National Office of the American Classical League represent definite progress, but much more needs to be done. In a typical American metropolis many people do not even know what Latin is much less what values it holds for their children. A concerted nationwide campaign in public relations is possible only if our National Office receives much more widespread support than it is currently getting.

The fourth important need of Latin in the

3. For general information on and evaluation of Level One of *Artes Latinae* see the report of Carolyn E. Bock and Grace A. Crawford in the *1968 Reports of the Northeast Conference* (New York 1968) 20-32. See also the double review, by Marian F. McNamara and Robert Bell, in this issue of *CW*.

4. Some description of this series is available in Erik Hoder's "*Lingua Latina secundum Naturae Rationem Explicata*" in *CW* 61 (1967-68) 47. See also the review by Annette H. Eaton in *CW* 61 (1967-68) 335-336.

5. Information on the Cambridge Classics Project is available from Miss Jane Alpert, Editorial Dept., Cambridge University Press, 32 East 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

6. See in this connection the remarks of John F. Latimer and Annette H. Eaton in the excellent article "Latin in Secondary Schools: A Six-Year Program" in *Foreign Language Annals* 1 (1967-68) 299-300.

7. Gerald F. Else, "The Role and Relevance of Classical Education Today," *Airlie Conference "Blue Book"* (Washington, D.C. 1965) 4.

8. See my article "Latin Materials for the Inner City Public Schools" in *CO* 45 (1967-68) 61-62.

9. In regard to Classics for a wider audience see Moses Hadas, *Old Wine, New Bottles* (New York 1963) 129-130. With inimitable charm Professor Hadas says that the issue is basically how much one loves mankind.

urban public schools is a strengthened and expanded program in Classical Studies in those colleges that tend to appeal to the graduates of the city public schools, viz., community colleges, junior colleges, and the low-tuition four-year colleges. In all too many of these institutions instruction in Greek and Latin is non-existent or very limited in scope. Since the bulk of the teachers for the public schools come from such colleges, it is obvious that the city school system is not going to get many Latin teachers unless these colleges have good programs in Classics. Also, more students would elect Latin in the urban junior and senior high schools if they knew that they could continue the subject in the low-tuition colleges of their choice. Also, in my opinion the complete absence of Greek and Latin from these colleges tends to foster the impression that our subject area is somehow unimportant and irrelevant.

How do we get good programs in Classical Studies into these colleges? I am not qualified to give all the particulars. I do know, however, that as junior colleges and community colleges are established and curricula are being developed it sometimes happens that no qualified classicists apply. Why not? Is such teaching considered in some quarters *infra dignitatem?* Also, more vigorous action and pressure on the part of the various classical organizations is necessary. What we must carefully avoid is the tendency to sit back and do nothing about weak or non-existent programs.

Perhaps revitalization of the Latin programs in large urban public school systems is the best means to produce a great national renaissance of interest in our subject. The major political parties have become well aware of the fundamental importance of urban centers to their causes, and they concentrate their efforts more and more on the cities. Perhaps we should do the same. Our manpower and resources are limited. Since we cannot fight on all fronts at the same time with the same effort and since Latin does have such a great potential contribution to make in the solving of the general educational crisis facing urban centers, perhaps we as a profession should focus our attention on filling Latin's needs in the big city public schools.

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